

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 00333 170752Z

20

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 SAM-01 CU-02 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /057 W

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O R 161756Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4266

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

LISBON 1610

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 0333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SP

SUBJECT: YESTERDAY'S CABINET MEETING

REF: A. MADRID 0285 (NOTAL); B. MADRID 0284 (NOTAL)

1. THE SPANISH CABINET, JANUARY 15, TOOK A STEP ON THE BUMPY  
ROAD TOWARDS A MORE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM. PARADOXICALLY  
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PAGE 02 MADRID 00333 170752Z

THE CABINET DID SO BY DECIDING TO EXTEND THE PERIOD OF THE

PRESENT, LARGELY UNREPRESENTATIVE, CORTES FOR A YEAR. IF NOT, THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN CORTES ELECTIONS ON MARCH 1, HELD UNDER THE OLD SYSTEM WHICH WOULD HAVE PERPETUATED THE FRANCO REGIME-STYLE PARLIAMENT. CONSERVATIVES HAD ARGUED THAT THE ELECTIONS, FOLLOWING AN EARLIER PROROGATION OF THE CORTES PRIOR TO FRANCO'S DEATH FOR THREE MONTHS, SHOULD GO ON AS SCHEDULED. TO HAVE YIELDED TO THIS IDEA WOULD HAVE DONE MAJOR HARM TO THE FRAGA/AREILZA/GARRIGUES TIMETABLE FOR POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. IN THE EVENT, ARIAS AND THE CABINET DECIDED FOR THE PROROGATION, CLEARING THE WAY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM THAT WOULD PROVIDE FOR A SUCCESSOR CORTES ELECTED, ONE ASSUMES, NEX YEAR ON THE BASIS OF SOMETHING APPROACHING UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE.

2. THE GOVT'S ANNOUNCEMENT RECALLED THE DEC 15, 1975 STATEMENT OF THE NEW CABINET PROMISING A BROADENING OF THE STATUTE OF CIVIL RIGHTS, QTE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RIGHT OF POLITICAL ASSOCIATION AND TO REFORM OF REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS IN ORDER TO BROADEN THEIR BASE. BOTH OPERATIONS ARE BASIC FOR THE PERFECTING OF OUR FUNDAMENTAL LAWS AND OUR POLITICAL LIFE AND REQUIRE A REASONABLE TIME FOR STUDY, DISCUSSION AND LEGISLATION, INCLUDING AN ELECTORAL LAW AND IN SOME CASES CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS. THE CELEBRATION OF CORTES ELECTIONS WOULD UNNECESSARILY STRETCH OUT THESE PROCESSES OF PERFECTING AND REFORMING AND COULD BE CONSIDERED AS NOT HAVING GIVEN SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITY TO THE ASSOCIATIONS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE WHICH ARE NOT YET CONSTITUTED OR ARE IN A PERIOD OF ORGANIZATION. UNQTE

3. THIS DECISION OF THE CABINET GOES TO THE KING FOR FINAL ACTION IN AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM. (WE ASSUME, REGARDLESS OF THE PERSONAL INCLINATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE REALM, THAT IT WILL NOT PLACE ROAD BLOCKS IN THE WAY, BUT THIS REMAINS TO BE SEEN.) THE GOVT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO CONFIRMED THAT ARIAS WILL PRESENT PLANS FOR REFORM TO THE CORTES ON THE 28TH OF THIS MONTH.

4. IN RESPECT OF THE PUBLIC ORDER QUESTION, THE CABINET ANNOUNCED NO NEW POLICIES BUT ISSUED A CLEVERLY WORDED STATEMENT AS FOLLOWS: "THE AIM OF CERTAIN EXTREMIST GROUPS OF DISTURBING OR CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 MADRID 00333 170752Z

POSTPONING THESE PLANS (OF REFORM), AND WHO HAVE IN RECENT DAYS SOUGHT TO PROVOKE THE GOVT AND THE MASS OF THE CITIZENRY WILL NOT HAVE ANY OTHER EFFECT THAN THAT OF DEFINITELY DISCREDITING THOSE RESPONSIBLE. THE GOVT WILL CONTINUE CALMLY ALONG THE ROAD SET BEFORE IT, IN THE SERVICE OF THE MONARCHY AND OF SPAIN."

5. THE DECLARATION REAFFIRMS A JUDICIOUS APPROACH OF USING MINIMUM FORCE TO HANDLE DEMONSTRATIONS AND TO MAINTAIN

ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES, SHOULD THERE BE EFFORTS TO STRIKE THEM (REFS). IT ECHOES WHAT IS BEING SAID WIDELY IN THE PRESS, THAT THE PCE SEEKS TO PROVOKE HEAVY HANDED GOVT REACTION AND DISCREDIT THE GOS AT HOME, AND PARTICULARLY, ABORAD. FRAGA HAS MADE CLEAR TO THE "ABC" NEWSPAPER THAT THE GOS WILL MEET ANY VIOLENCE WITH FORCE. THE GOS, RESPONDING TO THE EFFORTS TO POLITICIZE LABOR PROBLEMS, HAS ALSO BEGUN SOME FINE TUNING OF ITS APPROACH, ARRESTING A NUMBER OF CLANDESTINE LABOR FIGURES, REPORTEDLY FOR PLANNING A GENERAL, CLEARLY POLITICAL, STRIKE.

6. BOTH THE PROROGATION OF THE CORTES AND THE GOS RESISTENCE TO URGINGS OF THE RIGHT TO PROCLAIM A HARD LINE STAND THAT THE GOVT HAS WEATHERED A CHALLENGE TO THE COMPLEX COURSE OF STEP-BY-STEP POLITICLA DEVELOPMENT. BUT THE CHALLENGE POSED BY THE STRIKE WAVE WILL DRAG ON AT LEAST ANOTHER WEEK, EVEN THOUGH SOME LABOR DISPUTES HAVE BEEN SETTLED (REF A). THE DEMONSTRATIONS, LARGELY BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, HAVE ONLY MOMENTARILY DISRUPTED TRAFFIC AND ARE MODEST COMPARED TO THOSE OF PARIS, TOKYO, OR BERKELEY, ACTS OF VIOLENCE COULD OF COURSE ALTER THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE BUT THE POLICE ARE CAPABLE OF CONTROLLING LARGER AND MORE SERIOUS DEMONYTRATIONS. STABLER

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## Message Attributes

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